

**Mr. SCOTT of Virginia:** Mr. Speaker, we owe a duty to protect foreign nationals who provide valuable service to our soldiers, diplomats, and other government officials overseas. Often these individuals risk their lives and those of their families to assist and protect our endeavors and our people. It's only right that we give them the assistance and protection that they need.

When we pulled out of Vietnam, Vietnamese citizens who worked for our government, as well as their families, were at great risk of being killed if they remained in Vietnam. To protect them, we gave them the opportunity to resettle in the United States. That was the right thing to do then and it is the right thing to do now for those who help us in Iraq.

This bill addresses two problems that currently interfere with our ability to protect those who deserve our protection. The first is a drafting error in the new Special Immigrant Visa Program that we enacted in January for Iraqis whose lives were at risk because of their valuable service to our government. The visas under this program were supposed to be available beginning this fiscal year, but the drafting error has rendered these visas unavailable until the next fiscal year. In the interim, we can't help those who need our help. Many of those could die because of this drafting error. This bill would correct the drafting error to ensure that these visas can be immediately accessed.

S. 2829 also serves to assist several hundred Iraqi and Afghan translators who, because of the error, continue to apply for visas under the older program. Although many of their applications have been processed and approved, they can't come to the United States because of a cap at 500 visas in the program that has already been reached.

Despite having the support of the Department of Defense, the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security, these translators are without recourse and remain in danger. This bill addresses the problem by creating a 4-month transitional period under which the administration can allow persons with approved petitions in the old program to use one of the 5,000 visas in the new program.

We have all seen in the news that those who have chosen to help us in our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan are truly risking their lives for our Nation's interests. They are targeted by

insurgents for having helped us, their families are targeted, and this bill helps us protect them.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.